

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-44 are pending in this application, with Claims 1, 21, 41, 43, and 44 being independent.

Claims 1, 5, 8-10, 16, 21, 25, 28, 30, 36, 41, and 42 have been amended.

Applicant submits that support for the amendments can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added.

The specification has been objected to because the Examiner asserts that at page 13, line 24 "input terminal 100" should be --input terminal 101--. Applicant respectfully submits that lines 23-24 of page 13 of the specification refers to "information relating to *the image entered by the input terminal 100*" (emphasis added). In other words, the specification is referring to the input terminal used to input the image, and therefore Applicant submits that input terminal 100 is correct. However, Applicant has amended the paragraph to further clarify this point. Favorable consideration is requested.

Claims 1 has been objected to because at line 1, "embedds" should be --embeds--. That claim has been amended to obviate the objection.

Claims 1, 5, 8-9, 16, 21, 25, 28, 36, and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. Applicant has amended the claims in view of the Examiner's comments, and withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Claims 1-6, 8-16, 19-26, 28-36, and 39-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,477,276 (Inoue, et al.). Claims 7, 18, 27, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,535,616 (Hayashi). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention is directed to an apparatus which embeds predetermined information in an image and outputs the image to a printer which outputs the image as a print. That claim recites, *inter alia*, the features of quantizing divided image areas using the error diffusion method and controlling, in a unit of the image area, a quantization condition according to the predetermined information and for causing, in a unit of the image area, to generate a pattern in which the dot arrangement is different according to the predetermined information. With these features, it is possible to embed predetermined information such that the predetermined information can be extracted from the image even after the image is output as a print (as opposed, for example, to merely extracting the information from a digital file). Applicant submits that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least these features.

Inoue et al. '276 discloses that predetermined information is embedded for a frequency band of an image. However, that patent does not disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features. In particular, that patent is not concerned with an image that has been output as a print, and therefore it is not concerned with the problems of extracting information from a print. Accordingly, Inoue et al. '276 does not disclose or suggest embedding information using at least the features of quantizing using the error diffusion method and controlling as recited in Claim 1.

The other cited art fails to remedy the above-mentioned deficiencies. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is patentable over the cited art.

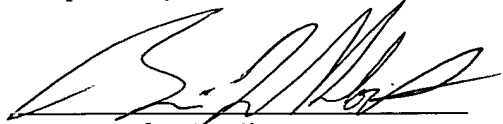
Independent Claims 21 and 41 recite features similar to Claim 1 and are believed patentable for similar reasons.

Regarding independent Claims 43 and 44, the Office Action asserts that these claims are respectively identical to Claims 1 and 21 except for being an apparatus and method for adding information to an image. However, Applicant respectfully points out that these claims recite a feature of generating power of a predetermined frequency component in unit of an image area according to predetermined information, wherein the predetermined frequency is a frequency component lower than a maximum frequency component generated by quantization. Those features are not recited in Claims 1 and 21, and Applicant submits that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least these features.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. L. Klock", written over a horizontal line.

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